

May 1, 2002

**Public Notice for Section 401 Water Quality Certification**

**California Department of Transportation Highway 101/ Washington Boulevard  
Interchange Improvement Project  
Del Norte County**

On March 7, 2002 the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the California Department of Transportation (CDOT) requesting Federal Clean Water Act Section 401 Certification for the Highway 101/ Washington Boulevard Interchange Improvement Project in Del Norte County. The application was deemed complete on April 3, 2002. The application covers disturbances to waters of the United States associated with Elk Creek and the Smith River Hydrologic Unit No.103.00.

The proposed project is in the southwestern quadrant of the existing Highway 101/ Washington Blvd. interchange, which is located approximately one-quarter mile north of Crescent City, Del Norte County, California, between PM 27.5 and PM 27.19. The purpose of the project is to improve traffic flow, safety, and operational deficiencies resulting from the existing interchange configuration.

The proposed project consists of the construction of a three-legged interchange that will use the existing Parkway Drive as the fourth interchange leg. A southbound on-ramp will be constructed on the west side of Highway 101, south of Washington Blvd. The project includes the removal of an existing culvert that is 12 meters long and 0.6 meter in diameter. The culvert conveys the flow of an unnamed stream that is tributary to Elk Creek. A new culvert that is 28 meters long and 1.8 meters in diameter will replace the existing culvert. The new culvert will convey water under the proposed southbound on-ramp to the highway. In addition, three adjustable weirs will be installed upstream of the new culvert for fish passage and to prevent the progressive down-cutting of the stream channel above the new culvert.

Installation of the new culvert and weirs will require draining the project area, which will be accomplished by constructing a temporary diversion dam and a temporary diversion pipe that will be sized to convey normal summer flows around the construction site. Instream work will take place between June 15 and October 1. The instream work, including replacement of the existing culvert, is expected to take less than 20 days. Adhering to this schedule should minimize impacts to the unnamed stream and migrating fish.

The total area of wetlands to be permanently filled is approximately 0.04 acre. A Mitigation and Monitoring Proposal has been developed to offset the impacts to wetlands. Mitigation for this project will be attained through the creation of freshwater marsh and riparian wetlands adjacent to Elk Creek. Wetlands will be created on 0.4 acre on each side of Elk Creek (total 0.8 acre) in the southwest quadrant of the Washington

Blvd/101 Freeway overpass in Crescent City. The site is currently highly disturbed uplands in the Caltrans right of way.

The California Department of Transportation (CDOT), as the lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has determined that this project qualifies for Negative Declaration pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The nearest receiving water is Elk Creek located in Smith River Hydrologic Unit No. 103.00.

The interchange project is scheduled to begin October 1, 2002 and end in November 2003. Regional Water Board staff has determined that there will be minimal impacts on water quality if this project is performed in accordance with the information submitted. Staff is proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Title 23, California Code of Regulations, Sections 3855-3861. Comments on this project should be submitted to **Ben Zabinsky** at [zabib@rb1.swrcb.ca.gov](mailto:zabib@rb1.swrcb.ca.gov), within 21 days of the posting of this notice.